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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: May 12, 1959

SUBJECT: Berlin Contingency Planning and German Questions

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Claude Le Bel, Minister, French Embassy
Mr. Jean-Claude Winckler, Counselor, French Embassy
Mr. Foy D. Kohler, EUR
Mr. Thomas D. McKiernan, GPA

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Mr. Le Bel, the new French Minister, called to pay his respects to Mr. Kohler. Mr. Winckler took the occasion to raise the following points in connection with Berlin contingency planning and other developments in Germany.

Efforts to Increase Pressure on USSR and GDR

Mr. Winckler said that a study of measures to implement paragraph 10 b of the tripartite Berlin Contingency Planning paper of April 4 presented no difficulties for the French. They had agreed in principle in February.

Identification and Checkpoint Procedures

Mr. Winckler said that the French Embassy here had received a summary report of the recommendations regarding Berlin access identification and checkpoint procedures agreed on by the three Embassies at Bonn. The French would be willing to accept the proposal that, in a situation in which the Soviets did not acknowledge GDR personnel as Soviet agents, the Allies would issue movement orders in multiple copies, have them stamped by Allied officers, and hand over one copy at each checkpoint.

Mr. Kohler replied that Mr. Murphy would raise the Embassy's recommendations in the Ambassadorial Group meeting May 11, point out that three questions remain to be resolved ("last resort" compliance with GDR demands to extricate a trapped movement, the choice of one of the two alternative recommendations for a non-agency

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agency situation, and the question whether movement orders should be issued for movements as a whole or for individuals) and would recommend that the Embassies at Bonn be instructed to work out final agreement on these questions.

UN and Berlin

Mr. Winckler said that the French UN delegation wished to add to the report "Possible Reference of the Berlin Question to the UN in the Absence of Agreement among the Four Powers" a sentence emphasizing the Working Group Agreement that the Western Powers should try to settle the Berlin question on a Four-Power basis rather than a UN basis.

Mr. Kohler said that we are thinking of suggesting the formation of a tripartite sub-group here to look further into the UN aspect of the question.

Election of Federal President in Berlin

Mr. Winckler raised the question of the Chancellor's concern about holding the election of the Federal President on July 1 in Berlin. Mr. Kohler replied that Ambassador Bruce had informed us that the Chancellor might like to have the three Ambassadors intervene with Bundestag President Gerstenmaier and that the Chancellor might raise the matter with Secretary Herter. We do not know the Secretary's views but expect a report shortly. We should not like to get in the middle of a dispute between the Chancellor and Mr. Gerstenmaier. Mr. Kohler added that the election could always be arranged to take place in Berlin at the last moment, but that, if it were arranged in advance for Berlin, it would be difficult to change the plans at the last minute if it seemed advisable to do so.

General Eddleman's Remarks

Mr. Winckler observed that the press had given two versions of General Eddleman's remarks on May 7 regarding the strategic implications of a withdrawal of U. S. forces from part of Germany. Mr. Kohler replied that the remarks were regrettable, but that the Reuters account had taken them out of context and distorted them. The essence of what General Eddleman said was the contrary of what the Reuters account implied. This is clear if one reads the entire text of the interview.

High Altitude Flights

Mr. Winckler said he has just seen a press report to the effect that Mr. Timberlake had stated in Bonn that more high altitude flights in the Berlin corridors would be made when the need arises.

Mr. Kohler answered that no further high altitude flights are planned for the moment, but that we are preparing a reply to the latest Soviet note on the subject. In this reply we may suggest that the Soviet Union could have the legal dispute involved adjudicated by the International Court of Justice. We will of course consult the French and British before sending such a communication.

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